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PHILADELPHIA, PA- NOV. 29, 2012 - Vision 2020, a national initiative to advance women's economic and social equality, gathered delegates and leaders from across the nation this month in Portland, OR for its Third National Congress.

The delegates reviewed state projects that promote Vision 2020's goals to achieve pay equity, to increase the number of women in senior leadership positions, and to promote family-friendly workplace policies, voter mobilization and civic engagement. Also, they developed strategies to sustain awareness of these goals and achieve success by the year 2020, which marks the centennial celebration of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote.

"Many of the issues we are addressing were discussed during the recent national election campaign and Vision 2020 is committed to ensuring that they continue to be part of the national dialogue," said Lynn Yeakel, founder and co-chair of Vision 2020. "These issues are important for women, for families, and for all Americans. We see positive change is happening and intend to keep the momentum going."

Executives from many Vision 2020's 50 national allies and organizations that represent more than 20 million women and girls, joined delegates to review successes and develop strategies to achieve Vision 2020 goals.

The project of Rhode Island delegates Marcia Cone, CEO of the Women's Fund of Rhode Island, and Susan Colantuono, CEO and founder of Leading Women, was to document the representation of women in senior leadership in for-profit and non-profit businesses in that state. The report, *2020 Vision for Rhode Island: Women, Leadership & Wages*, released in September, surveyed human resources professionals for the largest employers in the state. Twenty-two businesses responded.

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The report found no responding company had goals for women's advancement and while 57 percent of for-profit businesses and 23 percent of nonprofit said there were no obstacles to women's advancement, they were underrepresented in leadership.

Among the state projects aimed at increasing women in senior leadership positions are several that focus on recruiting and training women to run for elected office. For example, in Utah which ranks 43rd in the percentage of women running for its state legislature, Vision 2020 Delegates Sheryl Allen, a former 16-year state representative, and Deedee Corradini, former two-term Mayor of Salt Lake City, have developed a collaborative nonpartisan effort called "Real Women Run," which held two training sessions in 2012.

"Efforts like these are opening new doors for women," said Yeakel. "The cumulative effect of Vision 2020's state initiatives and national activities is increasing awareness of the importance of women's equality."

The Vision 2020 Congress closed with an award ceremony honoring former Oregon Governor Barbara Roberts and award-winning filmmaker Jennifer Siebel Newsom.

About Vision 2020

Vision 2020 is a national initiative advancing women's economic and social equality through collaborations with affiliated organizations and members in 50 states. Its goal is to move America toward equality by 2020, the centennial celebration of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote. Vision 2020 is a project of Drexel University College of Medicine Institute for Women's Health and Leadership.



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